



2009 Redeeming Fruits and Vegetable Vouchers (FVVs), A Local Agency Nutrition Education Resource for Participants

The new Interim Food Package Rule provides for the distribution of Cash-Value Vouchers (CVVs) or Fruit and Vegetable Checks for the purchase of fruits and vegetables by WIC participants (children ages 1-5 and women). This important provision recognizes:

- the benefits of the consumption of fruits and vegetables in decreasing chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and cancer;
- the low consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among WIC participants; and
- the role that WIC plays in helping participants meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) for fruit and vegetable intake.

General Information

- The AK WIC program will allow WIC local agencies to issue Fruits and Vegetable Vouchers to child participants (1-5 years old) and women participants with appointments on or after October 1, 2009. The dollar amounts are \$6, \$8, and \$10 per participant, depending on category, with each month's set of regular WIC checks.

How to Use the FVV

- The WIC FVV allows the purchase of **up to \$6.00, \$8.00, or \$10.00** worth of **fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits** from **any** WIC-authorized vendor that participates in the WIC Program in Alaska.
- The FVV **cannot** be used at Farmers' Markets, Farmers, and Farm Stands **until June 30, 2010**.
- The WIC FVV looks like a regular WIC check. Participants will redeem it in the same way as a regular WIC check at the WIC-authorized vendor, except as noted below.
- The "Not to Exceed" amount for the FVV is **\$6.00** for children and **\$8.00** for pregnant, postpartum, and partially breastfeeding women; and **\$10.00** for fully breastfeeding women.
- Just like the WIC checks, the "Not Good Before" and "Not Good After" dates are printed on the FVV. Participants must redeem the FVV during this period of time (30 days) only.
- Participants are allowed to buy **any combination** of allowable fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits with this WIC check. To properly redeem the CVV, the participant must shop with the **"AK WIC Authorized Food List, October 2009."**



Note: Review the following handouts with participants: "Mom and Baby Food Package", "Food Selection Criteria", and other nutrition pamphlets as required:

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- ✓ The Authorized Food List shows the products that are allowed and the types of products that are not allowed.
 - ✓ For canned and frozen products, national brands, store brands and private label brands **are allowed**.
 - ✓ For canned products, any container including cans, jars, pouches, etc., is allowed provided they are not from the salad bar or party platters.
 - ✓ For potatoes, only fresh and frozen sweet potatoes and yams are allowed; no other variety of potatoes can be purchased. Canned sweet potatoes and yams are not allowed because of high sugar content.
- Unlike regular WIC checks that prescribe specific foods in specific quantities, a FVV has a dollar denomination value to be used towards the purchase of any authorized vegetables and/or fruits.
 - Participants do **not** have to spend the entire amount/dollar denomination value of their FVV; they may spend **any** amount up to the total value of the voucher or check. They may also spend more than the total value of the FVV, if they choose to pay the difference with their own funds. (See below.)
 - Participants may combine multiple FVVs to pay a single transaction. **However, no change can be given to the participant if their fruits and vegetable purchase cost less than the value of their FVVs.**
 - They are **allowed** to pay the additional amount of their vegetable and/or fruit purchase with their own funds (which may include cash, personal check, credit card, Food Stamps or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) EBT card when the value of the FVV is less than the total purchase price. They can also decide to put back an item (or items) to bring their total purchases to within the maximum value of the FVV or less if they do not have their own funds to pay the difference. It is important to emphasize these options so participants are prepared when they approach the check stand.
 - The monetary amount above the value limit of a FVV that a participant pays for with her/his own funds is subject to any tax which applies to non-WIC purchases of fruits and vegetables.
 - When they are purchasing fresh produce, remind participants to weigh and note the price of their purchase prior to checking out. This will help ensure that their total purchase does not cost more than the allowable amount and they are prepared with what to do prior to approaching the check stand, making for a smooth transaction both for the participant and cashier. **Note: This is not always possible since many stores may not have scales at the register. Also, scales in the produce department and at the check stand may give different weights.**

